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NEWS RELEASE

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AIR CHARTER, RENTAL CAR ON LIST OF CREDIT CARD FRAUD CHARGES

WICHITA, KAN. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced today that **JAMES R. PATTON, JR.**, 38, has been charged in a criminal complaint with one count of credit card fraud and one count of interstate transportation of stolen property.

Patton was arrested Dec. 15 in Wichita by the U.S. Marshal Service on an outstanding warrant from Nevada, MO.

According to an affidavit filed with the court by a special agent of the U.S. Secret Service assigned to Wichita, Patton was driving a Hertz rental car when he was arrested. Investigation later revealed the car had been rented with a credit card that was reported stolen Nov. 23, 2004. The total owed on the car rental was \$2,800.

Later investigation also showed that Patton had approached several airport business operators in Kansas and discussed chartering flights or renting hanger space, indicating that he was a pilot. On Dec. 12, 2004 Patton chartered a flight from the airport in Augusta, Kan., to Vinita, Okla. He presented a VISA card to pay the \$667.06 bill but the payment was declined because the account had been closed. He used the same card to obtain lodging at the Comfort Inn, 4009 Park View Drive in Pittsburg, Kan.

The complaint against Patton lists four fraudulent credit card charges on three separate VISA cards totaling more than \$3,000.

If convicted, Patton faces up to 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine on each count. The U.S. Marshal Service and the U.S. Secret Service investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alan Metzger is prosecuting.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The

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charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.

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